



HOUSE DEMOCRATIC OFFICE

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS TALKING POINTS 2009-10 STATE BUDGET February 20, 2009

Florida is in economic crisis. Our people are deeply worried about their jobs, their financial future, their children's education. **Today should be a day to begin the healing...a day of bipartisanship.**

When the fire is raging and people are hurting, you don't turn away the ambulance. You make way for help. With the federal economic recovery funds provided by Congress and signed by President Obama, the Legislature can make way for help to our people.

We applaud Governor Crist for showing courage and saying he'll do the right thing by developing a budget that uses the federal economy recovery monies.

Some say we may need a **"waiver"** from the Obama administration to get the necessary federal economic stimulus funds. We think this Legislature should fight to meet the necessary spending requirements. **We want economic recovery funds to act as a stimulus—and to do so we may have to correct the injustices of prior year reductions in state spending.**

Florida House Democrats believe the Legislature must **work urgently in the short term to bring about economic recovery...and to ensure that the new federal dollars are spent as Congress intended.** However, we are mindful of the fact that we **need to show fiscal restraint in the long term.**

Threats to funding for core Education & Medicaid programs only raises the anxiety of the working population—the middle class. More than ever, we must ensure Florida families that the state will provide the vital services they need in economic crisis.

Florida is in this crisis, in part, because of the poor judgment of prior administrations that gave away millions of necessary dollars to wealthy special interests, in the form of tax breaks, that could have gone for vital programs and state savings.

We want all options on the table. If new revenues are necessary, we think there should be a bipartisan discussion and open dialogue, with participation from both parties and the public. But we also think any **new revenues should be restrained so that they don't injure the middle class and low-income workers or hurt the economy.**

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